

Wilmington VA Medical Center

Virtual Veteran Town Hall

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Wilmington VA Medical Center



May 12, 2021

Agenda

- Director Kane Remarks
 - Do Not Delay Care
 - Facility Improvements
 - Research
- COVID-19 Vaccine Updates
- Ending Veteran Homelessness, Increasing Access to Affordable Housing
- Health Chat
- Mental Health Awareness Month
- Caregiver Resource Fair 5/27
- Travel Reimbursement Videos
- Open Forum/Questions

Director Remarks

Vince Kane

Director, Wilmington VA Medical Center

Do Not Delay Essential Care

Schedule Your Appointments Now

- Our main Medical Center and five Community Based Outpatient Clinics continue to be open, safe and ready for your care.
- Please call ahead to notify us of your health care needs at **1-800-461-8262, select Option 2.**
- During this time, we want to discourage “walks-ins” and prefer that all care be scheduled.
- ***Please schedule all your appointments including blood work and x-rays prior to coming to any of our facilities.***
- We will do our best to consolidate all of your care into one visit.

Facility Construction and Expansion Updates

Parking Garage – Now Open

- Four-stories
- 370-spots
- Veteran parking is set for the first two floors whereas employees and other parking is for top two floors.



Facility Construction and Expansion Updates Benefits Office

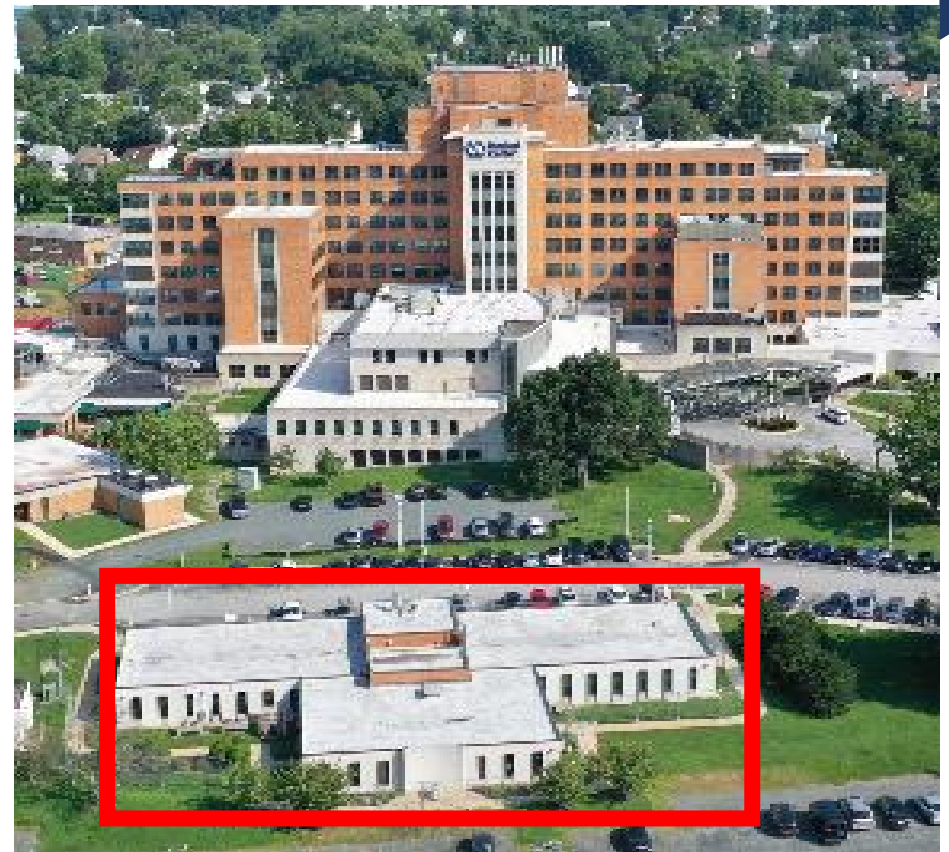
Began a complete internal renovation in mid-2020.

Renovation is moving along.

Once completed, will house:

- Veteran Benefits Administration offices
- Veteran Service Officers
- Medical Center administration offices

Anticipated opening mid to late Fall 2021.

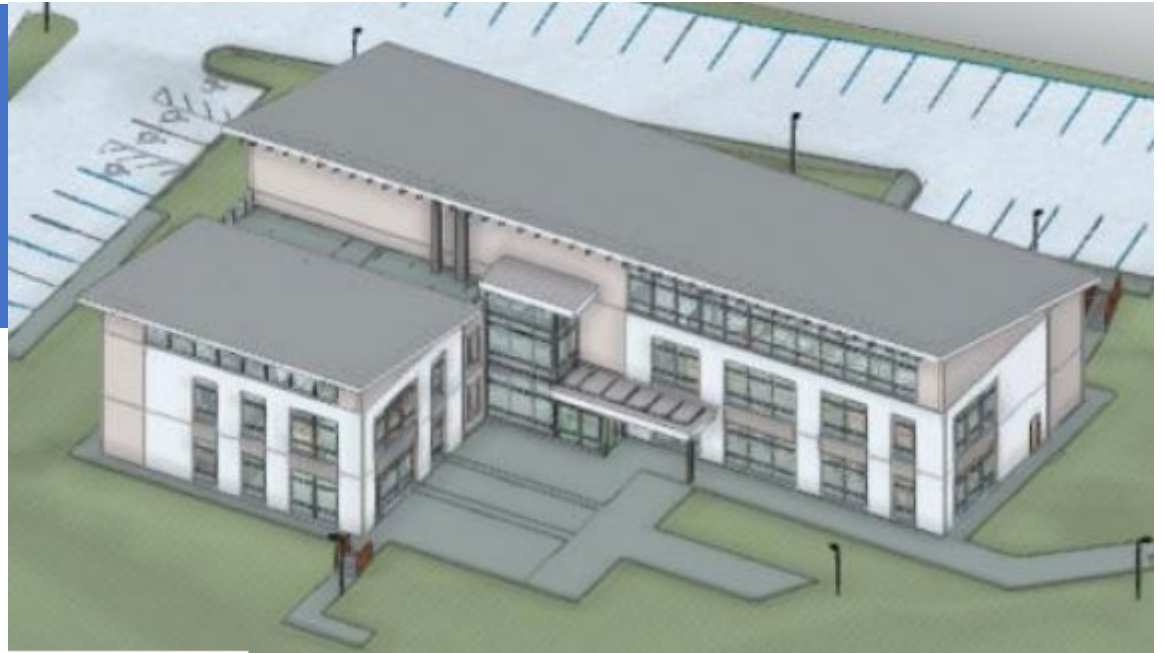


Clinical Admin Space

Began initial construction March 2021.

Will consolidate administrative services into one location.

Veteran-focused meeting spaces available.



Kent County CBOC Opened March 31

This move increased the clinic space from its current size of 9,000 square feet to over 29,000 square feet.

The additional space allows for the expansion of services such as primary care, behavioral health, specialty services, and telehealth.

Open now.



Facility Construction and Expansion Updates Atlantic County CBOC

Finalizing bid selection for new Atlantic County CBOC.
VA contracting finalizing selection process.
No estimate on completion date.

Research Program

Background:

- WVAMC has had only a limited research program in research years
- A research coordinator will be on board within a month
- A research advancement committee is being chartered
- Delaware has historically been under-represented in opportunities for research
- With leadership from University of Delaware/support from NIH, collaborating institutions have established research-enabling resources
 - IDeA network
- WVAMC has been recognized is now a member of this group

Research Program



SAGE QUERI PROGRAM
Safer Aging through Geriatrics-informed Evidence-based Practices

SAGE (Safer Aging through Geriatrics-Informed Evidence-based practices) QUERI

Over the next five years, SAGE QUERI will directly benefit VISN4's 275,000 enrolled Veterans who are aged 65 and over – representing 62% of VISN4 patients.

- [What Matters – “Surgical Pause”](#) Screens older Veterans at risk for poor postoperative outcomes and prompts a structured conversation to clarify patients' expectations for surgery and recovery.
- [Medication – “EMPOWER”](#) Educates older Veterans and their caregivers about potentially high-risk medications and empowers Veterans to make changes aligned with their health goals.
- [Mentation – “TAP”](#) TAP is a home-based, tailored intervention that improves functional capabilities of Veterans with dementia and reduces caregiver burden.
- [Mobility – “CAPABLE”](#) Assess and modify home environment to promote safe and independent living.

Research has shown that geriatrics-informed care improves health and outcomes for individuals, and, most importantly, *increases the number of days that older Veterans can age safely at home rather than in a hospital or nursing home.*



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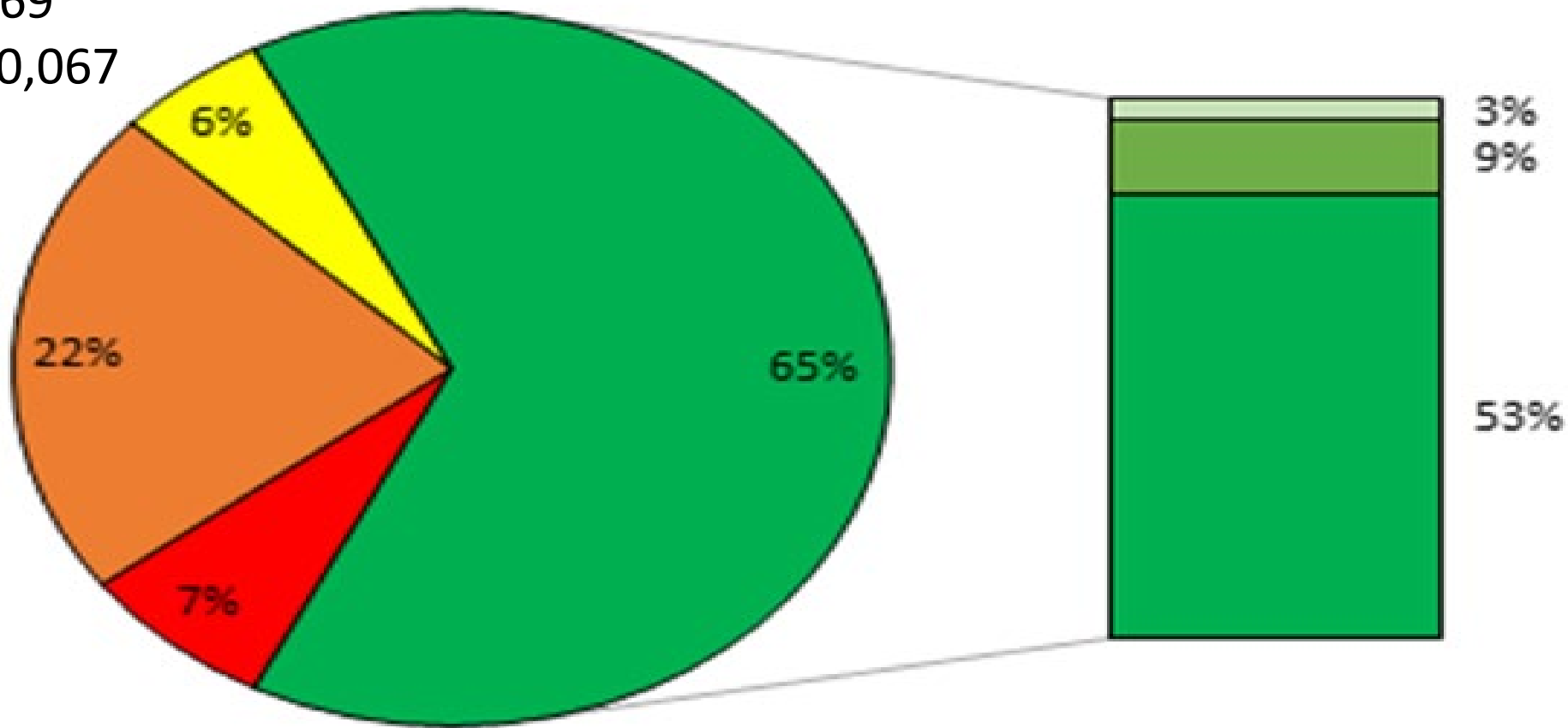
COVID-19 Vaccine Planning and Distribution

Loan Vu, PharmD
Chief of Pharmacy



Wilmington Vax Status

1st Dose: 14,725
2nd Dose: 14,753
Single Dose: 769
Total Doses: 30,067



- Declined/Refused
- Engaged, not vaxxed
- Not Assigned, not vaxxed
- VA Vaxxed (Dose 1 only)
- Vaxxed in Community
- VA Vaxxed (Complete)

Reporting Vaccines in the Community



Please notify your primary care team via secure messaging or bring your vaccination card to your next appointment so we can properly document your vaccination status.

Diseases Effectively Eradicated



Table 1.2. Rates of Selected Vaccine-Preventable Diseases in the 21st Century—United States

Disease	Max. Cases	Year	Cases 2012	Cases 2013	Cases 2014	Cases 2015	Cases 2016
Diphtheria	206,939	1921	1	0	1	0	0
<i>Haemophilus influenza</i> type b	~20,000	1980's	30	18	27	16	22
Measles	894,134	1941	55	184	628	188	72
Mumps	152,209	1968	229	438	1,151	422	5311
Pertussis	265,209	1934	48,277	24,231	28,660	13,004	1,634
Rubella	2.5 Million	1964–	9	9	8	4	2
Congenital rubella syndrome	~30,000	1965	3	0	1	1	0
Tetanus	601	1948	37	19	21	17	2
Varicella	221,983	1984	13,447	9,987	9,058	5,373	815

Fighting for Our Lives: VA Minority Healthcare Professionals Talk COVID-19 Vaccine

Minority health care professionals from VA facilities around the country told their COVID-19 stories to the VHA Office of Healthcare Transformation and encouraged those who are hesitant to get theirs.

Our own Dr. Irene Ibanez-Manlapaz, Chief of Pathology & Laboratory Management, explained why she got her vaccine to see her family. “It is very critical and important we protect our elders and out Veterans.”

[Trailer](#) | [Full Video](#)



Current COVID-19 Vaccination Criteria

www.wilmington.va.gov/services/covid-19-vaccines.asp

302-633-5200



- **Veterans:** Anyone who served in the U.S. military is eligible to be vaccinated through VA.
- **Spouses of a Veteran:** Spouses and surviving spouses.
- **Caregivers of a Veteran:** For COVID-19 vaccine eligibility, we define a caregiver as a family member or friend who provides care to a Veteran. Caregivers may help the Veteran with personal needs like feeding, bathing, or dressing. They may also help the Veteran with tasks like shopping or transportation.

Total SLA Vaccinations: **977 doses**

Where to Get a COVID-19 Vaccine

www.wilmington.va.gov/services/covid-19-vaccines.asp

COVID-19 Vax Hotline: 302-633-5200



Medical Center – By Appointment & Walk-ins

- Mon., Wed., Fri. 8 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.
- Tues., Thurs. 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

CBOCs – ***By Appointment Only***

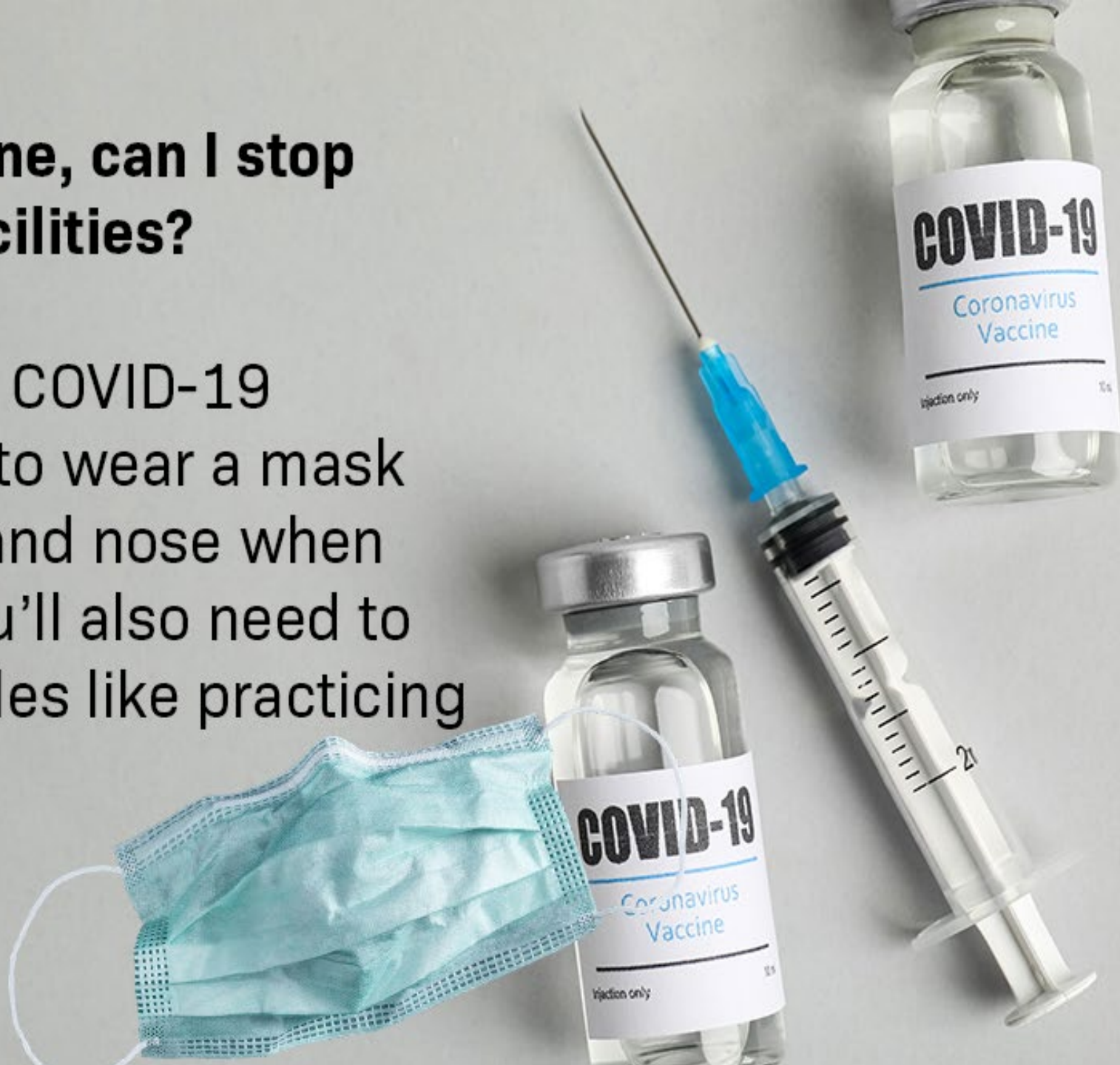
- Kent County – Fridays
- Sussex County – Wednesdays
- Atlantic County – Fridays
- Cape May County – Fridays
- Cumberland County – Fridays



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If I get a COVID-19 vaccine, can I stop wearing a mask in VA facilities?

No. Even if you receive a COVID-19 vaccine, you'll still need to wear a mask that covers your mouth and nose when you're in a VA facility. You'll also need to follow other VA safety rules like practicing physical distancing.



VA



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COVID-19 Vaccine Resources



- **[Wilmington VAMC COVID-19 Vaccine Page](#)**: This localized page will have the most up-to-date information for Wilmington VAMC's vaccination plan.
www.wilmington.va.gov/services/covid-19-vaccines.asp
- **[VA COVID-19 Vaccine Page](#)**: This is a public-facing page that answers questions about VA's vaccine plan. (www.va.gov/covid-19-vaccine)

COVID-19 Vaccine Hotline 302-633-5200
(8 a.m. – 4 p.m.)

Ending Veteran Homelessness Increasing Access to Affordable Housing

Jay Hills
Chief of Social Work Services

Celia Gonzalez, VA Homeless Programs Supervisor

Phone: 302-824-9322

Email: Cecilia.Gonzalez2@va.gov

Karen Zogheib, VA Housing Development Specialist

Phone: 302-944-2511, ext. 4470

Email: Karen.Zogheib@va.gov

Ending Veteran Homelessness

Increasing Access to Affordable Housing

- There is a low inventory of available housing for at-risk Veterans in our area, and landlords are not accepting [HUD-VASH \(VA Supportive Housing\) Program](#) vouchers at previous rates.
- This is leading to a housing and health crisis for vulnerable Veterans.
- Housing is an essential part of health care.
- Reliable housing leads to an increase in access to health care services.

Ending Veteran Homelessness Increasing Access to Affordable Housing

- Together we can end Veteran homelessness. Wilmington VA Medical Center's goal is to work with private landlords to educate and encourage them to accept HUD-VASH vouchers and house our nation's Veterans.
- As part of this education effort, Wilmington VA Medical Center will be holding a virtual landlord resource fair in June.

Resources: [HUD-VASH](#) (VA website), [VA Programs for Homeless Veterans](#), [HUD-VASH Program Eligibility](#), [HUD-VASH Program Office](#) (HUD website), National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at **1-877-4AID-VET**

Health Chat App for Veterans

Lisa Capuano-Olson, NP



<https://mobile.va.gov/app/va-health-chat>

Connect with Your VA Care Team Over Chat

Receive care from VA without stepping foot into a clinic or hospital. The VA Health Chat app provides easy, online access to chat with VA staff when you have minor health questions and more. Only patients receiving care at select locations are eligible to use VA Health Chat.

Veterans can use VA Health Chat for immediate answers when:

- Feeling ill and unsure about going to ED or urgent care
- Reporting reactions to or asking questions about medications
- Medical advice for minor injury or illness

Veterans can also use VA Health Chat to:

- Find closest VA facility
- Schedule an appointment
- Refill prescriptions
- Send non-urgent messages to care team



<https://mobile.va.gov/app/va-health-chat>



How To Register for VA Health Chat

- 1 Download the VA Health Chat app from the VA App Store, Apple's App Store, or Google Play. Or access VA Health Chat online through your desktop at mobile.va.gov/app/va-health-chat.
- 2 Select either My HealthVet, ID.me, or DS Logon to choose how you'll log in to VA Health Chat.
- 3 Select **Accept** to agree to the terms of VA system use.
- 4 Enter the username and password associated with your My HealthVet, ID.me, or DS Logon account. If you do not remember your password, select **Forgot Password?** and follow the instructions.

- 5 Log in to VA Health Chat using your preferred login credentials.
- 6 Now you're ready to chat with a VA care team member!



<https://mobile.va.gov/app/va-health-chat>

Health Chat App for Veterans

“With VA Health Chat, I’m able to respond to chats as they come in, without having to completely stop what I’m doing,” said U.S. Army Veteran Josef Mendez Lopez. “Chatting with a Clinical Contact Center staff member feels as personal and friendly as talking to a nurse inside a VA clinic. But I can do so on the go or from the comfort of my home.”

[Read Mendez’s full testimonial here.](#)



Connect with VA staff over chat.

mobile.va.gov/app/va-health-chat



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Mental Health Awareness Month

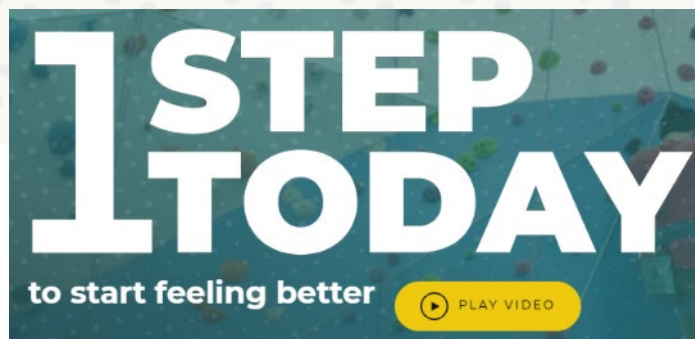
April Filiaggi
Suicide Prevention Coordinator



Ten Ideas to Get Started

from Veterans like you

Explore these ideas — things you can start doing *today* — that have helped many Veterans jump-start their recovery. Trying at least one suggestion from this list can make a difference in your health and well-being.



1 Find inspiration in fellow Veterans

2 Create something

3 Try. Then try again

4 Connect with people

5 Spark your passion

6 Open up

7 Talk to a pro

8 Discover what's available

9 Get active

10 Learn to forgive

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

[www.va.gov/QUALITYOFCARE/education/Mental Health Awareness Month.asp](http://www.va.gov/QUALITYOFCARE/education/Mental%20Health%20Awareness%20Month.asp)
www.mentalhealth.va.gov

Some of the symptoms and signs of mental health conditions can include:

- Feeling very sad or nervous
- Muscle tension and weakness
- Headaches or other physical pain
- Irritability, anger, or “short temper”
- Decreased energy, motivation, or interests
- Problems functioning at home, work, or school
- Problems with attention, concentration, or memory
- Changes in sleep, appetite, weight, or intimate activities
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness, or hopelessness
- Unhealthy behaviors (misusing drugs, alcohol, food, or excessive spending to cope with stress)



Do Not Delay Essential Mental Health Care

Reach Out

- Veterans in crisis should connect with the Veterans Crisis Line 24/7 to reach caring, qualified responders by calling **1-800-273-8255**, then pressing **1**, or by texting **838255**.
- Veterans and their families also can find resources at www.veteranscrisisline.net.
- Veterans enrolled in VA health care at the Wilmington VA Medical Center can call **1-800-461-8262** (Option **2**) or use MyHealtheVet at www.myhealth.va.gov to schedule an in-person or virtual appointment.

Gun Locks Available to All Veterans

Gunlocks are available and free to Veteran through Social Work at all VA locations.



Keeping Our Veterans Alive Governor's Challenge

Wilmington Veterans Affairs Medical Center and the American Legion – Department of New Jersey are leading an effort to organize local Veteran service organizations, local, state and federal government agencies, law enforcement, faith-based organizations and other health care systems in New Jersey to develop strategies and programs to end Veteran suicide in New Jersey – *Keep Our Veterans Alive (KOVA)*.

Read the full [Press Release](#).

Virtual Caregiver Support Program Resource Fair

May 27, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

John Austin & Koryn Lantz **Caregiver Support Program**

The Caregiver Support Program's goal is to engage with caregivers, family members and, community partners "to promote the health and well-being of family caregivers who care for our nation's Veterans, through education, resources, support, and services."

Virtual Caregiver Support Program Resource Fair

May 27, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Services included:

- VA Caregiver Support Program
- VA Whole Health
- VA Medical Foster Homes
- VA Community Care- GEC
- VA CLC
- Veterans Benefits Administrations
- Social Security Administration
- Veteran's Crisis Line
- Veterans and First Responder Healthcare
- Code of Support
- Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers – Operation Family Caregiver
- Caring Bridge
- State of Delaware
- DART – Paratransit
- Alzheimer's Association – Delaware Valley Chapter
- American Cancer Society
- American Heart Association
- Compassionate Care Hospice
- National Association for Mental Illness – Delaware
- Shipley Manor

Caregiver Support Program Resource Fair

May 27, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Registration:

[WebEx Registration Link](#)

Any questions, contact:

Koryn Lantz: Koryn.Lantz@va.gov

John Austin: John.Austin6@va.gov

Beneficiary Travel Self-Service System (BTSSS)

Beneficiary Travel Portal Instructional Videos

In November 2020, we launched the Beneficiary Travel Self-Service System (BTSSS), an online portal for Veterans to access and submit travel claims 24/7. BTSSS simplifies the claim submission process for beneficiaries and ensures timely processing and payment of travel reimbursements.

- Submit claims online 24/7, 365 days a year
- Track the status of submitted claims
- Reduce processing time for submitted claims
- Use self-help tools to make claim submissions fast and easy
- [Visit AccessVA](#), select submit a travel claim, and logon using a DS Log on account.



Beneficiary Travel Self-Service System (BTSSS)


Since its launch, there have been questions on how the new portal works, and to assist Veterans on how to access and use the new portal, a series of instructional videos were produced to help navigate the system. Please bookmark the following videos for convenient references on how to use BTSSS.

- [Playlist “Beneficiary Travel Self-Service System \(BTSSS\)”](#)
- [Beneficiary Travel Self-Service System \(BTSSS\) Introduction \(1 of 6\)](#)
- [How to Access BTSSS and Create Your Login \(2 of 6\)](#)
- [How to set up Direct Deposit and Access BTSSS using login options \(3 of 6\)](#)
- [How to submit a travel reimbursement claim for a VA facility appointment \(4 of 6\)](#)
- [How to submit a travel reimbursement claim for a non-VA facility appointment \(5 of 6\)](#)
- [How to check the status of your travel reimbursement claim \(6 of 6\)](#)



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Follow us on social media and sign up for our email list to get the most up-to-date information.

- www.wilmington.va.gov
- If you would like to receive News and Announcements and Emergency Alerts from Wilmington VA Medical Center, please subscribe to our [email list](#) .
- Follow @WilmingtonVAMC on

 [Facebook](#)

 [Twitter](#)

 [Instagram](#)

Wilmington VA Medical Center Veteran Outreach Team

The mission of the Wilmington VA Medical Center Outreach Team is to provide our Delaware and southern New Jersey Veterans with information regarding all VA health care services they may be entitled to. Team members assist Veterans in the enrollment process for VA health care.

They attend community events in southern NJ and Delaware in order to educate Veterans and their families on VA health care benefits, provide resources and answer questions.

If you have an upcoming event in Delaware or southern New Jersey and would like our Outreach Team to attend, please contact our team at VHAWIMOutreachTeam@va.gov.